

Argument/Remarks : 4/10/2007

okay to enter.

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REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 8, as amended, remain herein.

Applicants' independent claim 1 has been amended for clarity to state that "the holding member being located between the metal case and the ceramic honeycomb structure, fixedly holding the ceramic honeycomb catalyst carrier structure in the metal case." Independent claim 1 still prominently recites that the ceramic honeycomb catalyst carrier structure "is not loaded with a catalyst." The aforementioned amendment is consistent with applicants' disclosure as originally filed, and now specifies that the ceramic honeycomb structure is one specifically designed to be a catalyst carrier, not a structure designed for some other purpose.

Applicants' specification, pages 2-4, explains the situation existing in the prior art before applicants' claimed invention. As mentioned at page 2, lines 10-12, referring to applicants' Fig. 5, in the prior art a canned catalyst carrier was manufactured by manufacturing a ceramic honeycomb carrier body, transporting such a body to the catalyst manufacturer who loaded the ceramic substrate with catalyst, and the thus catalyst-loaded ceramic substrate was then transported to the canning manufacturer where it was incorporated into a canned, catalytic converter. However, applicants' specification, page 3, line 8, through page 4, line 14, explains the problems attendant such prior art systems, wherein ceramic honeycomb structures of conventional thickness used in such prior art systems are easily susceptible to cracks or chipping during transporting, catalyst application, canning, and handling, during each step of such processes, including packing, unpacking, and placing on or taking off of mechanical facilities